



# City of Cambridge Police Department

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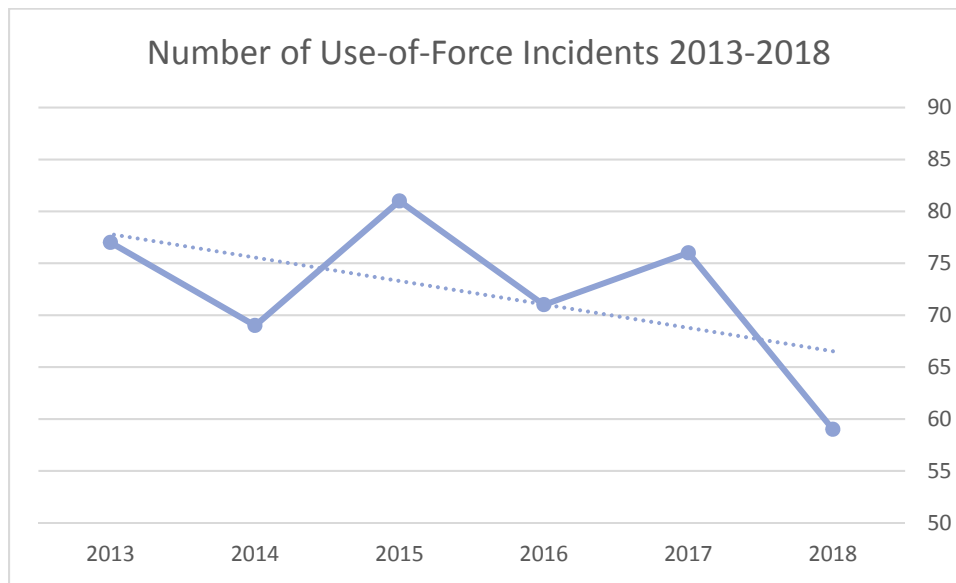
**Louis A. DePasquale**  
*City Manager*

**TO:** Chief of Professional Standards Andrea Brown      **DATE:** January 31, 2019  
**FROM:** Christa Cosenza, Case Manager      **REF:** AU2019-001  
**SUBJECT:** Use of Force – 2018 Annual Report

*The following report represents a review and analysis of the use-of-force incidents that department personnel were involved in throughout the year 2018. All incidents where force was used were found to be justifiable and appropriate for the situation.*

## **OVERALL SUMMARY**

In 2018, there were fifty-nine (59) incidents in which officers used some level of force towards a subject person, requiring that a use-of-force report be generated. This is a twenty-two percent (22%) decrease from 2017. This decrease follows a five-year pattern of overall decrease in use-of-force incidents for the department since 2013, with 2018 having the lowest number of incidents over the five-year period. Compared to 2017, there were significant drops in hands-on and takedown prone incidents, and slight decreases in the use of an impact weapon and a pointed firearm in 2018. There was a significant increase in the number of incidents resulting in the use of knee strikes in 2018. There were seven (7) of these use-of-force incidents in 2018, compared to one (1) in 2017, revealing a five-year pattern of steady increase in this type of force category. There were zero (0) incidents in which a firearm was discharged in 2018, in comparison to two (2) incidents in 2017 and three (3) incidents in 2016, revealing a steady three-year decline in this type of force category. The type of service rendered at the time most use-of-force incidents occurred was responding to a call for service, and the most frequent reason for force was to effect arrest. In 2017, the most common service rendered was arrest, however, this difference is subjective given the change in personnel who decide how to categorize this statistic. Lastly, the highest percentage of use-of-force incidents in 2018 involved one officer, whereas in 2017 the highest percentage involved two officers. However, in 2018 there were more incidents involving three and five officers than in 2017.



The analyses below will discuss more in depth the types of force used, the services rendered at the time force was used, and the officers involved in these incidents in 2018.

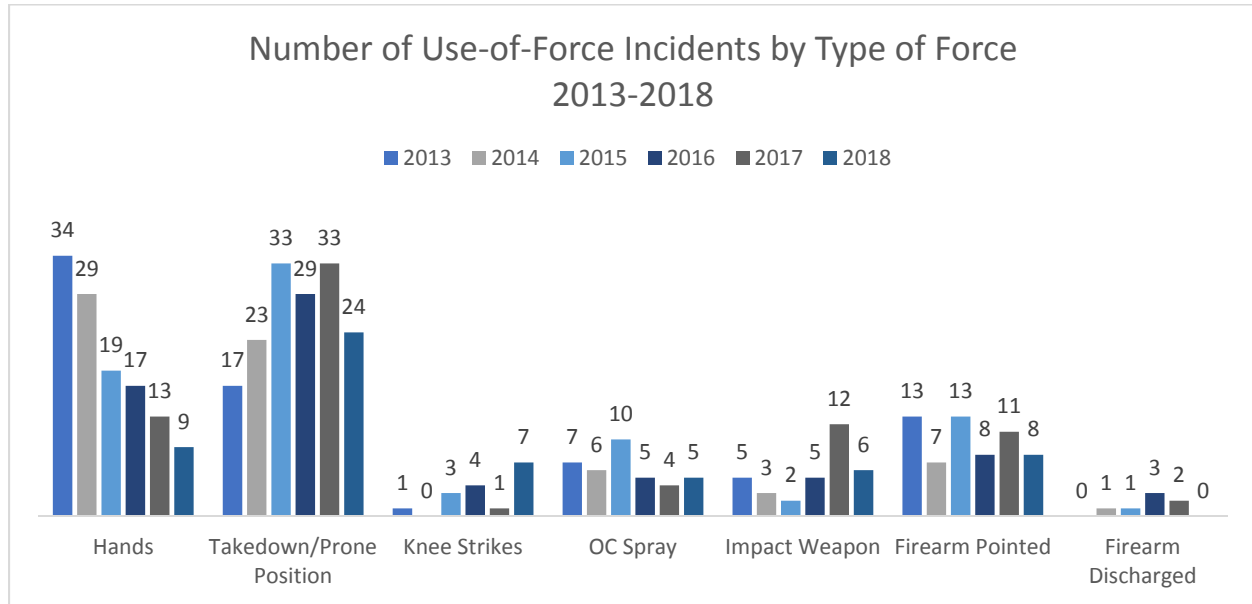
### **TYPE OF FORCE USED**

The following data represents the greatest type of force used in each incident. In some instances, multiple kinds of force were used during a single incident (i.e. use of hands and placing an individual in a prone handcuffing position) and, to alleviate any overlap or double-counting, the greatest type of force used during each incident was documented and used in this analysis.

In 2018, there were zero (0) incidents in which a firearm was discharged. There were eight (8) incidents in which a firearm was pointed. After a review of each incident, it was found that in five (5) the suspect was armed with a firearm, and in only one (1) of those instances was there a weapon found, however it was a BB gun, not a firearm. In four (4) of these five incidents a felony motor vehicle stop was conducted. In the remaining three (3) incidents that involved the use of pointing a firearm the suspect was in possession of a knife. During one (1) of these incidents it was known to officers that the individual had a history of mental health issues, but the suspect was cooperative during the interaction with police and no one was injured.

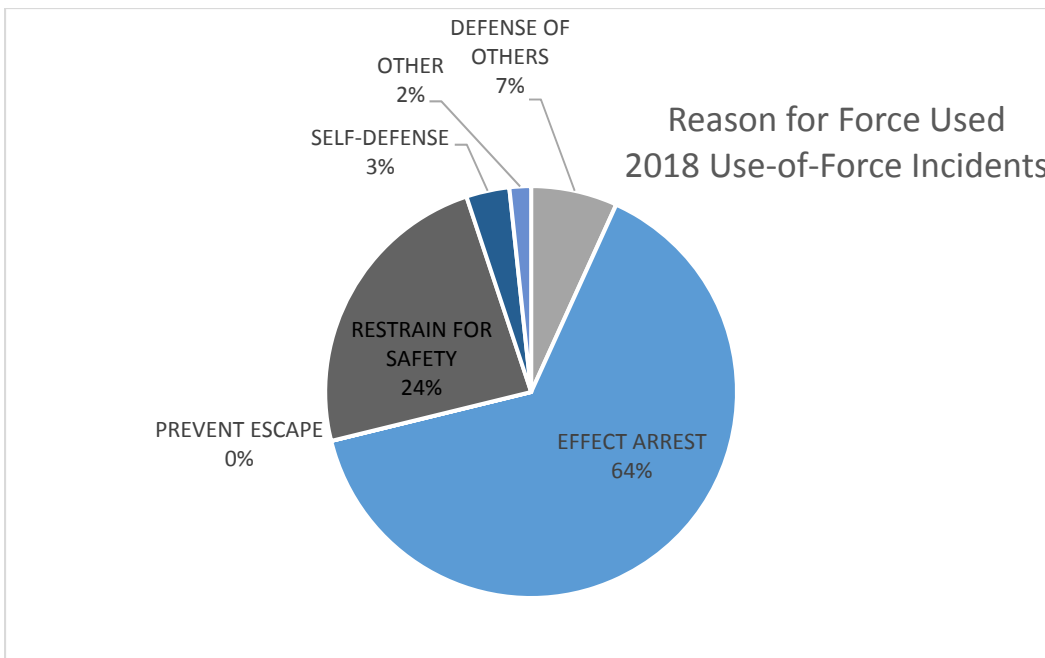
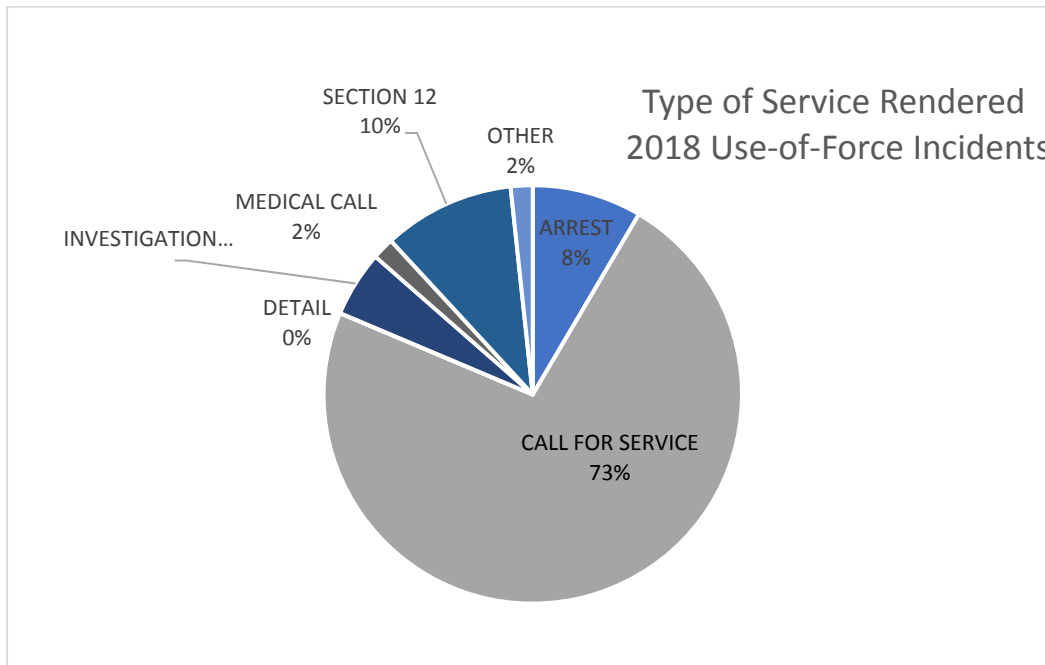
The number of hands-on incidents has continued to decrease over a five-year period since 2013, with nine (9) incidents in 2018 compared to thirteen (13) in 2017. Between 2013 and 2017 there was a steady increase in the number of use-of-force incidents in which a takedown/prone position was used, however in 2018 there was a significant drop in the number of incidents for this type of force category with twenty-four (24) incidents, compared to thirty-three (33) in 2017. The number of use-of-force incidents in which the knee-strike was the greatest use of force significantly increased in 2018 compared to the past five years, and especially compared to

2017 when there was only one (1) incident. The use of OC spray does not show any significant increase and falls in line with previous years' numbers. Lastly, the number of incidents in which an impact weapon was utilized has dropped significantly in 2018 with six (6) incidents compared to twelve (12) in 2017; however, over a four-year period, there is an increasing pattern for this type of force category.



**SERVICE RENDERED**

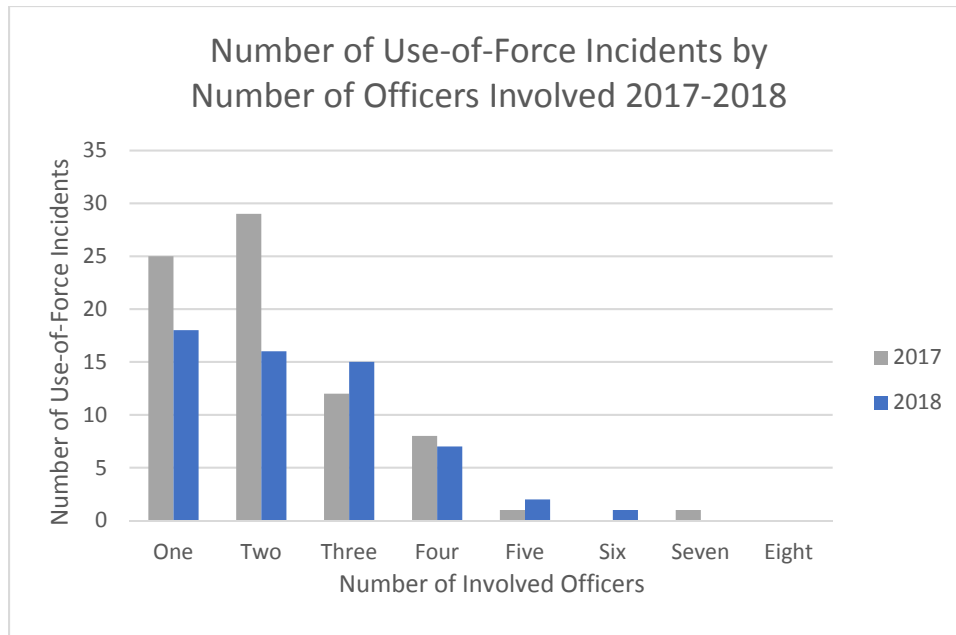
The largest proportion of use-of-force incidents in 2018 resulted from officers responding to calls for service. There were forty-three (43) out of a total of fifty-nine (59) incidents in which a call for service was made and officers ultimately used force as the incident unfolded. Of the total number of use-of-force incidents, the reason for force in sixty-four percent (64%) of the incidents was to effect an arrest. The second largest percentage for reason for use of force was to restrain for safety. This percentage corresponds with the six (6) section 12 or involuntary psych incidents that required force in 2018, which was the second most frequent service rendered in this sample of 2018 incidents. More analysis could be done that would lend greater insight into the topic, such as the types of calls for service that result in use of force. The charts below display all services rendered during use-of-force incidents and reasons for the use of force in 2018.



### OFFICERS INVOLVED

In 2018, there were seventy (70) officers involved in an incident in which force was used. This is a twenty-five percent (25%) decrease from 2017, in which ninety-three (93) officers were involved in use-of-force incidents. Of the seventy (70) officers, twenty-three (23) officers, or thirty-three percent (33%), were involved in two or more incidents. In 2017, forty-nine percent (49%) of officers involved in use-of-force incidents were involved in two or more incidents, therefore, 2018 shows a seventeen percent (17%) drop in the percentage of officers involved in multiple use-of-force incidents. One officer was involved in seven (7) incidents in 2018, and three (3) of these incidents resulted in the officer pointing his firearm. All use-of-force incidents in 2018 were

deemed to be justified through the chain of command. The chart below compares the number of incidents officers were involved in between 2017 and 2018.



In most of these use-of-force incidents any injuries sustained by the subject or the officer were minor in nature. Sixty-four percent (64%) of incidents where force was used resulted in no injuries sustained by either the subject or the officer. Of the fifty-nine (59) incidents, injuries to the subject were reported in sixteen (16) of them, or twenty-seven percent (27%). These injuries mostly consisted of abrasions or cuts from being taken to the ground or residual effects from being sprayed with OC spray. Six (6) subjects were treated for OC exposure, and one (1) of these subjects was treated for a broken upper rib, which is the most serious injury sustained by either a subject or an officer in 2018. The subject that sustained a broken rib injury was extremely combative and non-cooperative with officers during his arrest and thrashed violently on the ground as officers attempted to hand-cuff him. The use of force for this incident was deemed justified and within policy.

## CONCLUSION

The department consistently has all justifiable use-of-force incidents due to continued emphasis on training and policy compliance. In 2018, there has been a decrease in the number of use-of-force incidents, yet a slight increase in moderate levels of use of force, such as the use of knee strikes, impact weapons, and OC spray. However, there has been a significant decrease in firearm pointing and firearm discharge compared to 2017 use-of-force incidents. There has also been a decrease in the number of officers involved in a use-of-force incident, as well as a decrease in the percentage of officers involved in more than one incident. This decrease could be due to a number of factors, such as the increased focus on training to de-escalate situations through

communication before the use of force is necessary, or the rise in media attention of police officer use of force across the country resulting in criticism from the public.

The department received scrutiny from the media regarding one incident that occurred on April 13, 2018 involving four Cambridge Officers and a black male. This incident was video recorded by multiple witnesses and these videos were posted online for the public to view. The department conducted a review of the incident and determined that the force used was justifiable and that the officers acted in accordance with the training they had received in defensive tactics and use of force.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Professional Standards Unit